

ABSTRACT

RIGHTS MANAGEMENT

Apparatus for determining the output of a contract or agreement at any point in time as required, comprising means for creating a state machine representative of the contract or agreement, at least some of the clauses and/or conditions of the contract or agreement being represented as a respective state variable of the state machine, means for storing the state machine, means for receiving data representative of one or more events relevant to the contract or agreement, determining whether the event changes the state of the state machine and changing the state of the state machine if required. The apparatus of the present invention, can provide the core for licence repository and automated rights management services, making the task of rights decision-making easier and more efficient. A preferred embodiment involves providing an novel digital representation of the contract, the unique aspect of this model being that it is dynamic, in that it accurately captures the sequential characteristics of real contracts. In other words, the present invention provides means for explicitly capturing the full sequential, conditional flow of a contract, including specific outputs (rights and obligations) for states within the contract.